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I'm **Carolyn Sluis**, and I'm a teacher.

I change student's lives. I encourage them to think, and to think for themselves, to be as Emerson writes, "self-reliant," and to be as Einstein describes himself, "driven by an intense curiosity."

As an adjunct professor at Central Connecticut State University and Manchester Community College teaching Freshman Composition, I do not teach during the break between semesters or during the summer. I do not receive any pay. I pay for my own health insurance. Summer and break teaching positions are given to full-time faculty, who are paid over a twelve month period.

I take my pink slip, when the employer will provide one, and my Cobra statement to Unemployment to receive unemployment benefits, stipulating that as the AAUP contract states, I am not guaranteed any future employment, and that any official offer of a teaching position is contingent on enrollment, funds, and not being bumped by a full-time faculty member. Unemployment always sets up a hearing to which the employer may or may not respond.

In the course of the few years that I have been teaching, designing a quilt of class sections at State and private institutions, I have experienced a growing trend to having appeal hearings, during which I have been yelled at by a referee, rushed by several, and made obliged to appeal to the Board of Review, which ignores findings of fact and simply refers to precedent cases, even those of mine currently under appeal to the Superior Court to which the employer to date has not responded.

"Reasonable assurance" has been interpreted at times as meaning that if there is a reduction in the number of courses previously taught at the institution at which you were last teaching, i.e., the one at which you gave your last final exam, then the referee has found in my favor.

Over the last two weeks, I have been at appeal hearings regarding a claim back in May of 2010 that had already been adjudicated by a referee, who had found that I could retain my unemployment benefits and that CCSU would perhaps need to reimburse these benefits to Unemployment. Notices were sent this past September to MCC and now MCC has appealed the same claim. Two hearings, two days in succession were scheduled, much to the puzzlement of the head referee and the agency representing MCC, but the conclusion from the Board is that it was because two benefit years were involved. In both cases, the Unemployment Administrator is accused of gross error. The finding is that I may have to pay back some of the amount going back to July, the month in which my benefit year changes.

The latest thing is that going by earlier experience and in claiming unemployment for this past December break, I was confident that I would receive it as the teaching load this spring is not the same as last semester as I am only teaching one course, not two at MCC. The apparent finding is that my unemployment will be apportioned as if I were half unemployed, and CCSU earnings are removed while MCC earnings are retained so that I will receive less than full unemployment benefits. And I can repeatedly argue that I receive one W2 form, and that the State of Connecticut is my employer, but all in vain.

The concept of "reasonable assurance" is being used to lead to inconsistencies and power struggles between Unemployment and hired contractors, the Referees, and the Board, and I appear to be caught in the middle.

The critical point is that I am unemployed for a portion of time, like a seasonal worker, who works at the need of the employer, and any promise of future employment is a contingent carrot before the donkey.

It is an egregious inequality not to allow a part-time teacher to receive part-time unemployment, simply because I am a teacher, who like Ichabod Crane travels about the countryside, teaching where he can. And like Ichabod, I need to eat. I need the unemployment benefits to which I am entitled, to sustain myself as I endeavor to weave a quilt of part-time semester appointments into something approximating full time work.

Respectfully submitted on February 14, 2011.

